

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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/058 W

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R 030900Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASH DC 7847

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

US MISSION US BERLIN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

US NATO 728

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NATO, PFOR, US, CZ

SUBJECT: VE CELEBRATIONS

REF: A) STATE 069791 B) PRAGUE 656

1. AT REQUEST OF ZANTOVSKY (HEAD SIXTH DEPT MFA), DCM RETURNED MAR 28 FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF COMMEMORATION OF END WWII AND IN PARTICULAR OF US ROLE IN LIBERATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

2. ZANTOVSKY TELEPHONED MAR 26 AND SAID IT WOULD HELP MFA IF EMB COULD PRESENT FURTHER INFORMATION IN WRITING BEFORE MAR 28 MEETING.

DCM ACCORDINGLY SENT LETTER MAR 27 MAKING FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) LIST WAS GIVEN OF MEMORIALS TO US PARTICIPATION ON CZECH SOIL,

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AT CHEB, LNARE, KOLOVEC, PILSEN AND KASPERSKE HORY. WE NOTED

THAT LAST THREE HAD BEEN TAKEN DOWN AND SAID IT WOULD BE POSITIVE STEP

IF THEY COULD BE REPLACED. (B) IF CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO PLACING NEW MARKERS (AS ZANTOVSKY HAD HINTED), WE SUGGESTED AREA AROUND CESKY BUDEJOVICE (BUDWEIS), WHERE US AND SOVIET TROOPS FIRST MET IN BOHEMIA. (C) PLANS TENTATIVELY WERE FOR WREATH-LAYING AT CHEB BY AMBASSADOR AND BY DCM AT LNARE, BOTH ON MAY 7. MENTION WAS MADE OF POSSIBLE CEREMONY AT PILSEN, CENTER OF US FORCES' ACTIVITY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND CZECH VIEWS WERE INVITED ON SUBJECT. (D) TENTATIVELY, EMB RECEPTION BEING CONSIDERED FOR MAY 8.

3. AT MEETING MAR 28, ZANTOVSKY EXPLAINED THAT SIXTH DEPT WAS SPENDING GOOD DEAL OF TIME WORKING ON VE DAY, BUT HE WAS NOT IN POSITION YET TO GIVE FIRM COMMITMENTS. DCM REPORTED POSITIVE REACTION FROM DEPARTMENT TO CZECH ATTITUDE, AND SAID US SIDE WELCOMED THIS SPIRIT OF COOPERATION. ZANTOVSKY SAID FRANKLY THAT DATES OF CELEBRATIONS IN PRAGUE HAD NOT BEEN DISCLOSED TO HIM, SO PLANS HAD TO BE SOMEWHAT TENTATIVE, BUT MAIN POINT TO HIM WAS THAT ROLE OF US FORCES IN LIBERATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA NOT GO UNNOTICED. IN THIS RESPECT WREATH-LAYING WAS MOST IMPORTANT, AND HE SUGGESTED WE AGREE FIRMLY ON MAY 7 DATE FOR THESE. HE HAS BEEN LOOKING INTO POSSIBILITY OF LUNCHEON FOR AMBASSADOR TO BE OFFERED BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON MAY 7, AND HE WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH ABOUT THIS. TENTATIVE PLANS WERE FOR WREATH-LAYING TO BE ATTENDED BY LOCAL OFFICIALS, MOD REPRESENTATIVES, AND ANTI-FASCIST FIGHTERS LEAGUE REPS. DCM SAID IF IT TURNED OUT THAT WREATH-LAYING CEREMONIES WOULD ALSO BE STAGED AT OTHER PLACES BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, E.G. AT KOLOVEC OR KASPERSKE HORY, EMB WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO PARTICIPATE. IF GOC WISHED, EMB WOULD ALSO BE GRAD TO LOOK INTO POSSIBILITY OF SOME REPRESENTATIVES OF FIRST DIVISION, PERHAPS AN HONOR GUARD OR SOME OTHER SMALL UNIT, COMING OVER TO CHEB FOR CEREMONY. (DCM WAS CAREFUL TO MAKE NO COMMITMENT IN THIS MATTER, SINCE IT HAS NOT BEEN RAISED OFFICIALLY WITH ARMY, AND EMB WOULD IMAGINE LIKELIHOOD OF CZECH ACCEPTANCE IS SLIGHT. NEVERTHELESS IT SEEMED AN IDEA WORTH MENTIONING. ZANTOVSKY TOOK NOTE AND SAID HE WOULD LOOK INT IT.)

4. DCM TOOK UP MATTER OF FUNDING VETERANS' TRAVEL AS INSTRUCTED IN PARA 2 STATE 069791. ZANTOVSKY SAID HE HAD BEEN LOOKING INTO THIS BUT FRANKLY, WHILE FUNDS MIGHT BE FOUND FOR COMPARATIVELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHEAP TRIPS FROM SOMEWHERE CLOSE-BY, FUNDING TRAVEL FROM US LOOKED TO BE DIFFICULT. MATTER OF PROVIDING HOSTINVMHERE IN PRAGUE WAS SIMPLER, OF COURSE. HE SAID HE WAS NOT GIVING A NO, HOWEVER, AND WOULD CONTINUE TO LOOK INTO MATTER. (COMMENT: SINCE SENDING US VETS WAS OUR IDEA AND NOT THEIRS-- MAKING THIS CASE SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM SOVIET ONE--WE ARE RATHER DOUBTFUL GOC WILL GO BEYOND PROVIDING PAYMENT FOR STAY WITHIN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THEREFORE WE REQUEST DEPT LOOK INTO POSSIBILITY OF US VETERANS

GROUPS PAYING EXPENSES OF TRAVEL TO EUROPE.)

5. ZANTOVSKY DID NOT BRING UP QUESTION OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION EXCEPT IN ONE REGARD. HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN IDEA OF COMMEMORATION AT CESKY BUDEJOVICE, WHERE US AND USSR FORCES MET, AND SAID THIS COULD BE LIKE COMMEMORATION OF MEETING AT ELBE. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE MENTIONED NEED FOR HIM TO LOOK INTO GETTING SOME SOVIET VETERANS TO COME TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA. DURING DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE US RECEPTION, ZANTOVSKY NOTED THAT SCHEDULES COULD BECOME DIFFICULT ON MAY 8, AND PERHAPS MAY 7 WAS DAY TO CONCENTRATE ON. DCM REPLIED THAT WE WERE READY TO AVOID SCHEDULING CONFLICTS, BUT IF AMBASSADOR WAS TO BE OUT ALL DAY FOR WREATH-LAYING IN CHEB AND PERHAPS PILSEN, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO COME BACK AND HOST RECEPTION THAT SAME DAY. DCM MENTIONED POSSIBILITY OF RECEPTION MED-DAY MAY 8 INSTEAD OF EVENING. ALL OF THIS WAS LEFT IN TENTATIVE STATUS. (COMMENT: ZANTOVSKY HAS BEEN PRETTY VAGUE ABOUT EXACTLY WHERE SOVIET VETERANS WOULD BE, IF INDEED ANY SHOWED UP. SINCE DISCUSSION HAS BEEN SO TENTATIVE SO FAR, DCM DID NOT FEEL IT NECESSARY AT PRESENT STAGE TO DISCUSS EXACTLY WHAT PART SOVIET VETERANS WOULD PLAY. EMBASSY'S GENERAL POSTURE HAS BEEN ONE OF RECEPTIVENESS TO ANY IDEAS GOC ADVANCES FOR PROPER COMMEMORATION OF US ROLE IN LIBERATION. IF IT APPEARS THAT DEFINITE PLANS ARE MADE FOR SOVIET VETERANS TO COME-- AND THIS MAY DEPEND PARTLY ON WHETHER ANY US VETERANS PLAN TO BE HERE--THEN WE ARE FREE TO DISCUSS EXACTLY WHAT SOVIET ROLE SHOULD BE.)

6. EUR/EE SHOULD REQUEST ASST SECY HARTMAN'S ADVISE ABOUT ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES AT CSCE GENEVA DURING WEEK MAY 5-9 AND MORE SPECIFICALLY PRIORITY HE WOULD WISH TO GIVE TO AMBASSADOR'S PRESENCE IN PRAGUE OVER HIS REMAINING IN GENEVA. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH. AMBASSADOR BELIEVES PRAGUE VISIT PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY IF NOTHING CRUCIAL GOING ON IN GENEVA.
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